



U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson's Chief of Staff Lloyd Smith addressed the Mississippi River Commission Monday in support of the St. Johns project.

MRC testimony by Lloyd F. Smith for Rep.

Jo Ann Emerson

General Riley, members of the Mississippi River Commission and interested parties. Welcome to Cape Girardeau, Missouri and Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson's Congressional District and her hometown.

Thank you for holding this hear-

ing in Jo Ann's hometown and at the upper reaches of the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project.

Before asking your assistance on various projects in Missouri Eighth Congressional District - I would like to set the stage for today's hearing

by sharing a little history.

This year is the tenth anniversary of the flood of 1993. A flood that has redefined what flood levels are possible on the Mississippi and from Cairo to Minneapolis and from St. Louis to Omaha on the Missouri right

here in Cape Girardeau the flood of 1993 set new records.

Other records were set in Commerce, Chester, St. Louis and beyond.

Flood fights at Ste. Genevieve and Dutchtown helped save entire communities. But, unfortunately in late

July of 1993 the Federal levees at Kaskaskia and Perry County collapsed and millions of dollars in damages occurred.

The Len Small Levee in Illinois failed and the Commerce to Birds Point Levee saw its highest levels since 1973.

And believe it or not the "high water" inspection in April 1993 did not - I repeat did not - forewarn the flood of June and July of that year.

In fact the Mississippi in the Spring of 1993 was not exceptionally high. But the historic flood came and in

some cases conquered.

But thankfully, the floodwall here at Cape and the Diversion Channel Levee as well as the Commerce to Birds Point structures held.

Since these crises have passed, many feel that the need for flood protection and drainage has passed.

Nothing could be further from the truth. If anything, the needs are greater today and Jo Ann Emerson's job along with her Missouri colleagues' is more critical than ever.

The 1993 flood which brought national TV coverage to the Midwest and cost billions of dollars in damages was a wake-up call that must not be ignored.

Ten years later, we find ourselves fighting for improved protection for people and their livelihoods and fighting environmental elitists who care more about increasing memberships in their organizations than they do in protecting people.

They are more concerned about endangered species than the human species.

Well thankfully, some are realizing this attack on our way of life and are fighting for real flood protection projects and people rather than muscels and minnows.

This year also marks another anniversary. The 75th anniversary of the 1928 flood control act, the benchmark of federal legislation following America's greatest natural disaster - the 1927 flood.

If those same environmental elitists groups mentioned earlier had existed in 1928 this legislation would never have passed.

The levees from Cape to New Orleans would still be a hodge podge of private structures and billions of dollars in damages and thousands of lives would have been lost.

Thankfully, the Sierra Club and Environmental Defense Fund did not stop the Floodwall here in Cape being constructed or improved levees from Cape to New Orleans from being built.

And folks, we owe it to those who fought the floods of 1927, 1937, 1973

and 1993 to focus on what flood protection is all about.

It's about putting people first. It's about putting protection for people at a higher level than protection for the pallid sturgeon and least tern. It's about putting the health and safety of our citizens before mussels and minnows.

And it's about putting money in the Federal Budget to keep the devastation of 1993, 1973 and 1927 from happening again.

And we need this Commission to keep providing these forums and use your "bully pulpit" to keep these issues in front of the Administration and the Congress.

As a member of the Appropriations Committee in the U.S. House, Jo Ann Emerson will continue to do just that. She will request additional funding for the Corps to help with flood control issues and the ever emerging issues of water safety and port security posed by the new terrorists threat.

And she is committed to encouraging her colleagues to follow her lead.

In closing, I have attached specific concerns relating to the Eighth District and would ask they be a part of the record as well.

I would also like to thank the Memphis District for their continuing help on progress and efforts throughout the district. Their dedication has certainly been beyond the call of duty.

Whether it is the ongoing battle of the St. John's Project or the St. Francis Basin, the Colonel and staff have been outstanding.

The St. Louis District and entire Vicksburg Division have been responsive as well to Jo Ann Emerson and all of Southern Missouri.

Thank you Colonels and General for your hard work. Thank you General and Commission for this opportunity and on a personal note, congratulations to R.D. James on his re-nomination to Mississippi River Commission.

**Projects of Concern in the Eighth Congressional District
Len Small Levee in Southern Illi-**

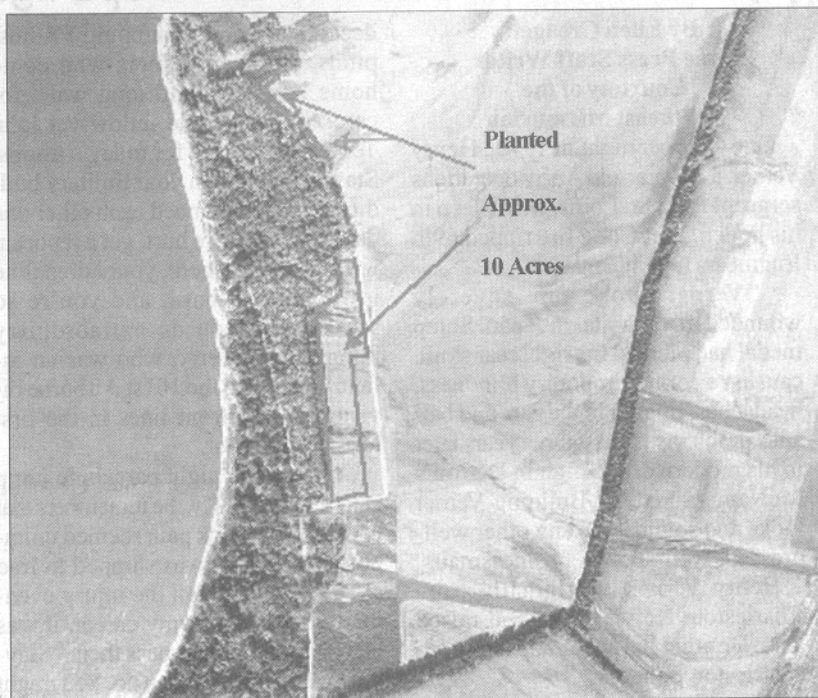
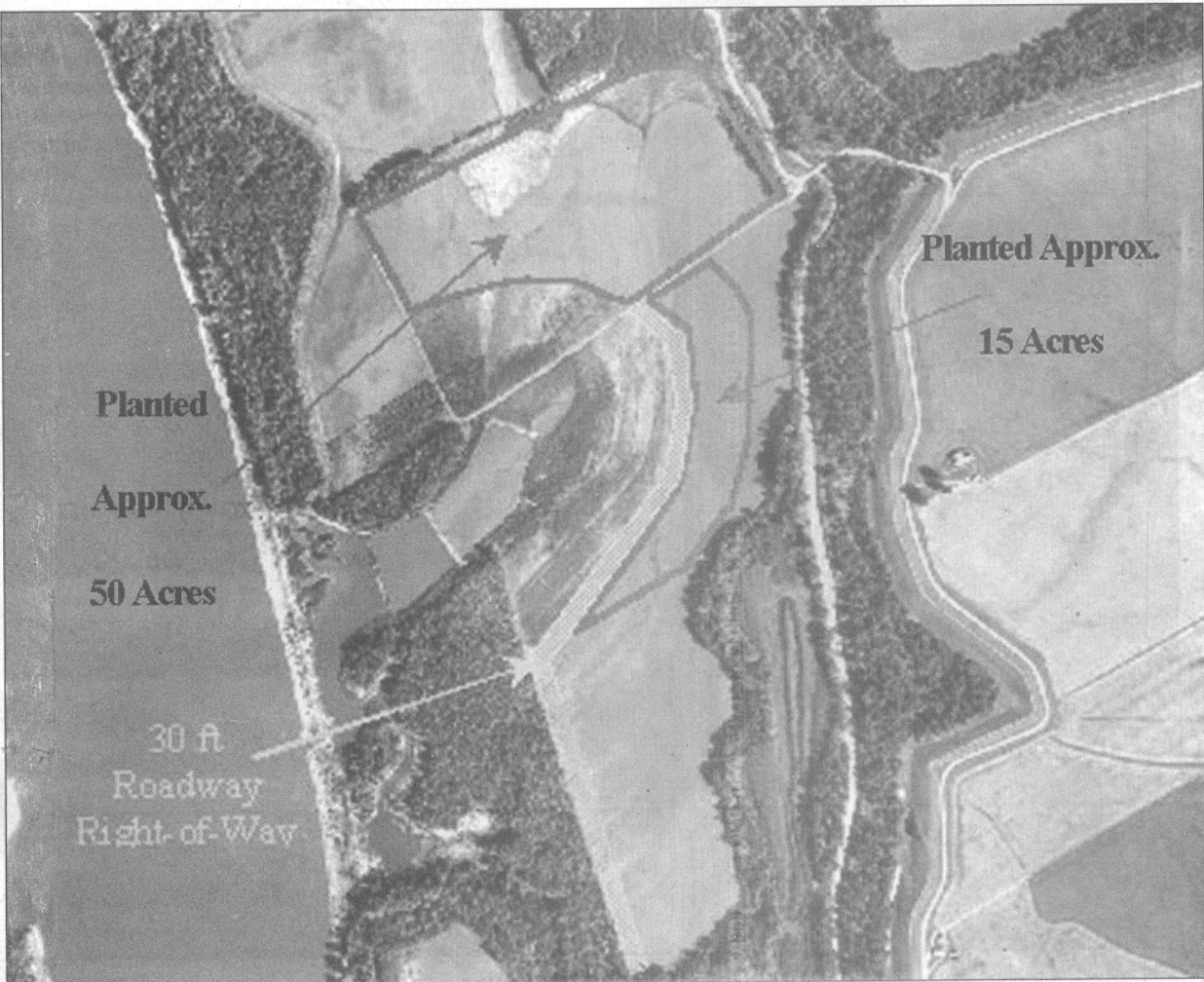
nois - This levee protects agricultural acres in southern Illinois. Any improvements to the structure should recognize the potential negative impact on the Commerce to Birds Point Levee. A failure of this section of levee in Missouri would bring devastation of enormous levels. The St. Louis Corps, Memphis District and Vicksburg Division are requested to monitor and insure citizens of Missouri and Arkansas are not put in jeopardy due to any improvements to the Len Small Levee.

Commerce to Birds Point Levee - The improvements are progressing and the Memphis District is to be commended. Additional relief wells and the required ditching must be completed to maximize the improved benefits to landowners in the area. The Memphis District has requested to work with local interests to achieve these goals.

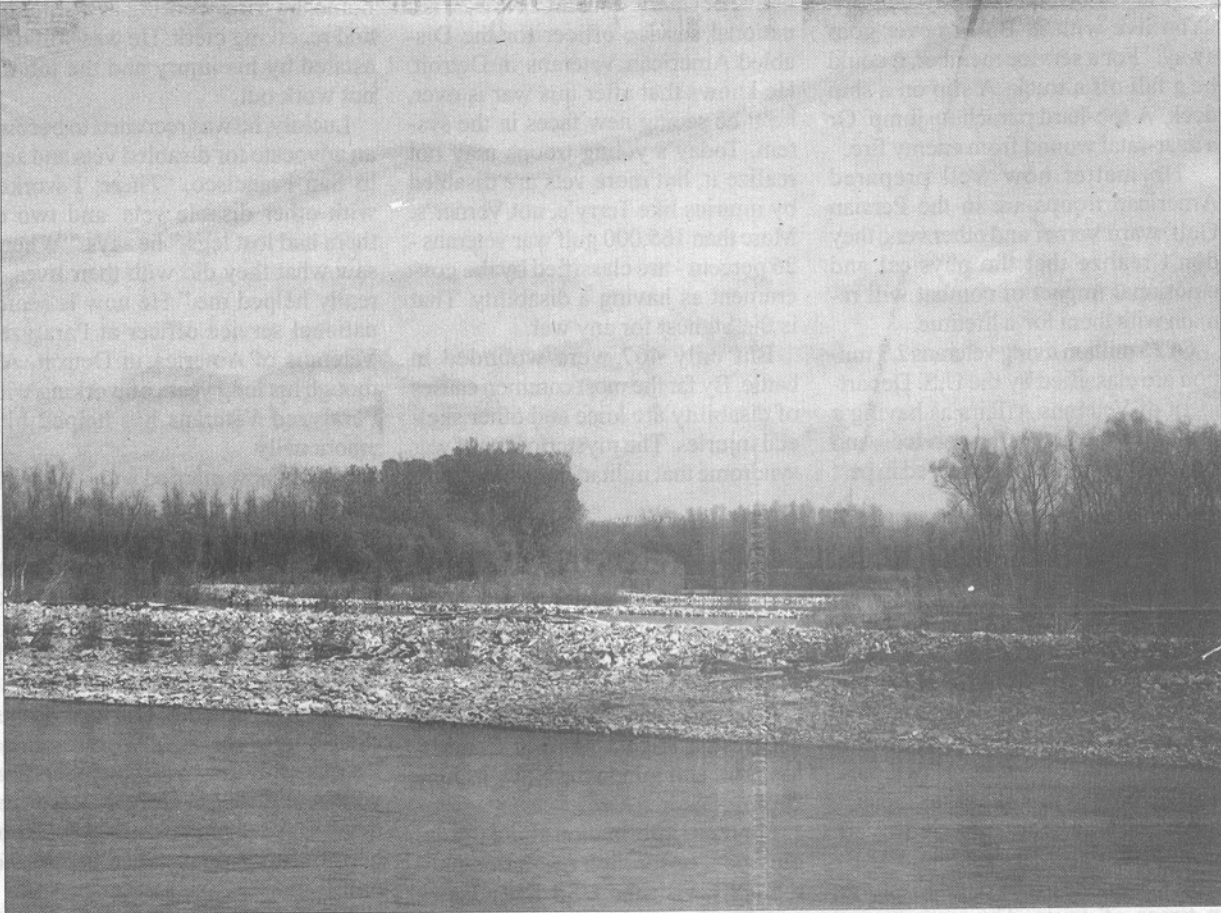
St. Johns-New Madrid Floodway Project - The required permits are still pending. It is requested that all diligence and dedication be given to acquiring these permits and moving forward with construction as soon as possible. Funding in excess of \$25 million is available from appropriations and previous reprogramming of past funds.

Other projects included: Perry County Levee - Bois Brule Project, Cape Girardeau Floodwall and Pumping Station, New Madrid Riverfront, Elk Chute, St. Francis River - Highway 90, Lake Wappapello,

General Items - The Little River Drainage District through the St. Francis Basin project needs improved funding levels. Congressional interests will work with local interests to achieve these goals. The MR & T needs to be funded close to the capability levels and Congressional interests will work to achieve these funding goals. The Endangered Species Act is due for reauthorization and it is in the interest of the Corps and local sponsors to take a firm stand in favor of property owners and reasonable rules concerning endangered species.



These aeri-als, courtesy of the St. Louis District Army Corps of Engineers shows where the 39,250 trees were planted on March 27th - 29th out on Thompson Bend. Most were across the throat of the Bend, designed to keep the river from forming a cutoff across the neck of the bend. If that were to occur, navigation on the Middle Mississippi would be disrupted for a long time. This is part of the Thompson Bend Riparian Corridor Project, which calls for planting a 300-foot strip of trees on the top bank from here to Commerce. The photo at right shows where the trees were planted at Graveyard Ridge. Lester Goodin's MRC testimony Monday concerned this project.



This is the view of the Lower Dry Bayou break in the top bank as seen from the Motor Vessel Mississippi Monday. The Corps has installed baffles in the scour hole to reduce flood river velocities. Trees are growing up behind the hole. Photo by Liz Anderson